MARVEL
ULTIMATE
SPIDER-MAN
12
HICKMAN
CHECCHETTO | WILSON
DEC. 2024 | RATED T

DING DONG
Somebody get the door!
On it, Mom.

DECEMBER

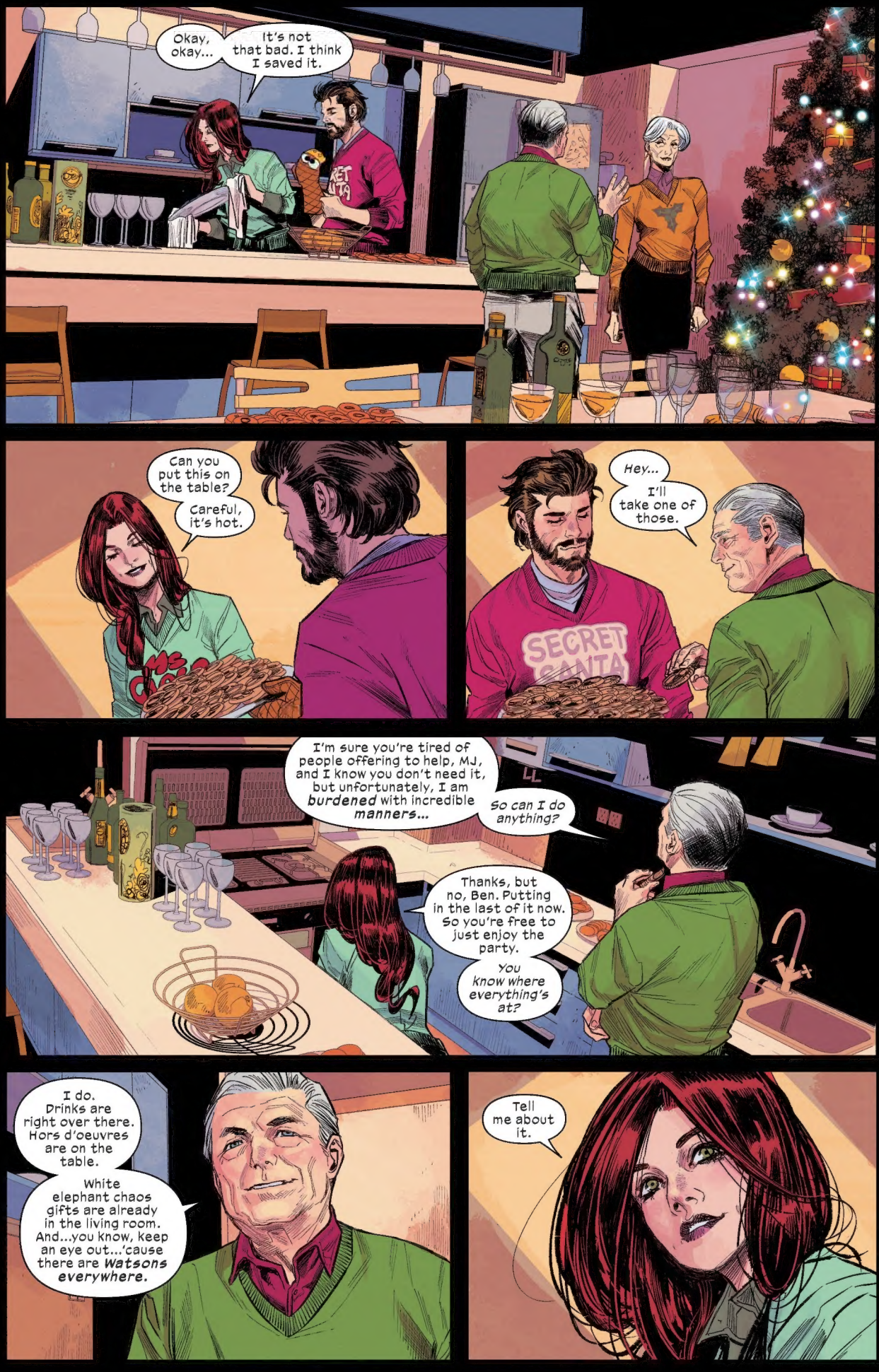
Hey, kiddo. Hope we're not late.

Nah, you're right on time.
Party's just getting started.
I see everyone's all dressed for the occasion.
Just like I said...
Christmas sweaters are a requirement for friends and family.
Enough. I'm wearing the hat. This is as friendly as I get.

Huh. A bit of a different crowd this year...
Yeah. Mr. and Mrs. Brock couldn't make it, and then we had a few surprises...
Obviously you know Aunt Anna. She wouldn't miss this for the world.
Of course. Wait...is that Gayle?
Yeah. Big surprise.
Well, your mom does invite her sister every year...
Yeah but, you know, she never comes.
Soooo...that's a good thing. Right?
I dunno, Uncle Ben. I'm just a poor, simple teenager, way outta my depth when it comes to things like complex adult relationships.
MOM! JUST PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING! I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL!
Speaking of...
Grandma's back from one of her trips.
Grandma?
Oh. My. Goodness. Madeline Watson. World traveler. Three-time widow. Occasional mother.
How's that going, Richard?
Well. It's Grandma...

I'm just saying, Mary Jane, this is a lot...
But if you don't want my help...
It's fine, Mom. Really. I was trying to keep it simple. Casual finger food.
I might have overdone it.
Hey, Mom, can I play games on your phone?
Sure, May. Just let me know if someone calls.
What I meant was this is a lot for someone who doesn't cook. Won't cook. Can't cook.
Whichever it is.
It was catered, Mom. You just stick it in the oven and heat it up.
It's not a big deal.
And speaking of things that aren't a big deal...
...how long are you planning on staying in town?

Trying to get rid of me already, dear?
Of course not. I'm happy you're here. Very happy. But you didn't tell anyone you were coming and I just want to plan accordingly.
So...do you have any idea *how long* it's going to be?
I haven't really thought about it, Mary Jane.
We'll see what comes up.
...
Let me know when you do.
I'll make sure you're the first person I tell, dear. Anyway...
How's Ben Parker doing? You know, after everything that happened.
He's good. Doing well.
It *looks* that way.
Is he seeing anyone yet?
...
Mom.
Time passes. People need to *move on.*
Have new *experiences.*
Mom. Do not.
Seriously.
Seriously, Mary Jane. I think your food might be *burning.*
#@%@&+!
PETER!


Okay, okay...
It's not that bad. I think I saved it.
Can you put this on the table?
Careful, it's hot.
Hey...
I'll take one of those.
SECRET SANTA
I'm sure you're tired of people offering to help, MJ, and I know you don't need it, but unfortunately, I am *burdened* with incredible *manners*...
So can I do anything?
Thanks, but no, Ben. Putting in the last of it now. So you're free to just enjoy the party.
You know where everything's at?
I do. Drinks are right over there. Hors d'oeuvres are on the table.
White elephant chaos gifts are already in the living room. And...you know, keep an eye out...'cause there are *Watsons everywhere.*
Tell me about it.

BIP
BIP
BIP
Grrrrrr.
BOOOOOP
Losing?
Lost.
Yeah. That's going around.
Do you remember me?
You're Aunt Gayle. Mom's sister. I've seen lots of pictures.
But you don't remember me, do you?
Of course she doesn't. You haven't seen her since she was two.
And don't act like it's on her that she doesn't remember.
RING RING
Gwen Stacy
Mom, Gwen is calling you.
Decline
Accep

Just let it go to voicemail.
And go play over there if you don't mind.
Happy you came.
Thanks.
Why?
What do you mean?
You know what I mean. Why show up? Why after all this time?
Why?
Can't you just be happy to see me?
I am happy to see you--
And I'm happy to see you too--
--if you can finally apologize for what you did.

...
I don't know what you're talking about, Mary Jane.
Oh. You don't know?
I suppose I could guess what you're talking about, but even then, I'm not sure I'd need to apologize for it.
You don't *think* telling me that I was wasting my life because I married the wrong guy and then saying that having kids was making all those mistakes permanent *isn't* something you need to *apologize for?*
...
I just thought you could have done better.
Reindeer

You think they're ever going to work things out?
You know how it is, Ben-- you do your best and then you let them go.
Hopefully it's for the best, and if it's not, you endure the pain of not being able to save them from it.
How are *you* doing?
Oh, I'm great. *Can't you tell?*
If she can't, some of us sure can.
Speaking of enduring things.
Oh, shush. You know you're happy to see me.
And you're going to love what I got you for Christmas.
Please tell me it's not you moving in with me until you figure out where you're off to next.
It is *exactly* me moving in with you...and spicing things up.
Get ready! Watsons on tilt. Drinks for lunch and doubles in the evening.
How are you able to be this way?
Oh, I just keep going. No matter what.
Tell her, Ben. *You know.* Eventually you gotta get up and get back on that horse.

Yeah. Well...
...I just hope MJ and Gayle work things out.
Me too. Because she needs her.
Gayle's getting divorced.
When did that happen?
Not sure exactly. She doesn't want to talk about it much.
I just found out last week.
Woof. Divorce. Never fun. Now, I'm not one to give unsolicited advice...
Uh-huh.
...but having experience with being divorced--as well as being a widow...
...I do know that they both have the same solution...
That right?
Yes, Ben. They do. Lie down for a while, have a good cry, but like I said--sooner or later...
...you gotta get back on that horse.

Unbelievable.
First, my mother...the nerve of her.
Just showing up with no warning, no heads-up, and then acting like she's the one who's put out?
Let me tell you...I don't even want to think about where that could lead...
But Gayle?
We haven't talked--*really talked*--in years, and she's spouting the same garbage that...
Honestly, I don't know that I want to get past it. Forgive and forget? *Not likely.*
But if that's the case, why did I invite her? *Why do I always invite her?*
Sigh
Because I don't want it to be this way. And I have to hope for something better, right?
Yeah. Of course.
Thanks. You're the best.

Hey, kiddo...how you doin'?
Pretty good.
I finished your book.
Ha! So...
Great? Or really great?
Well, I have questions.
Do you now?
Specifically about chapter 14.
Ah, chapter 14--"Finding Love in the Big City." One of my favorites.
You got any experience with that?
Absolutely none.
Sure. I get it. Hard to get any experience when it's *lack* of experience that's keeping you from having any.
Normally, with a smart and good-looking kid like yourself, I'd tell you not to worry about it. Just give it time.
But should an opportunity arise, might I suggest chapter 17?
Chapter 17...
"I Don't Know $#@%... but I Sure Act Like I Do"?
First. Watch your language.
Second. Absolutely. The ol' "fake it till you make it."
It's a gamble, but what isn't? *Right?*
Right.
It's a pretty helpful book, isn't it?
Yeah. Thanks again.
No problem. Maybe spread the word. I still have inventory.

Come with me.
I want to be clear about something. I love you, but this nonsense between us has to stop. I *want* it to stop...
But you have to meet me halfway. Deal?
...
I could do that.
So spill it. Why are you here? Why now?
...
I found out Douglas has been having an affair. I'm getting divorced.
#@$%!
Can you fix--?
I've added it all up. Thought about seeing if I could save things. Find some way to work it out...
Then I found out it's been going on for a couple of years. Several years. And people knew.
#@$%!

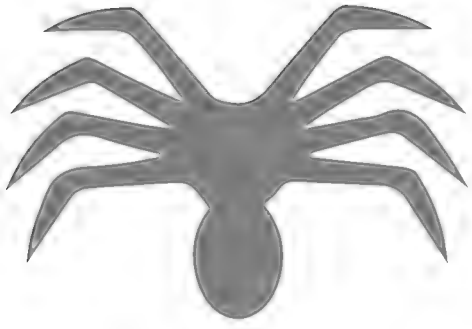
Are you gonna kill 'em? 'Cause if you are, I could help.
You know, dig a hole. Not in the committing of the actual act. *Maybe I could drive.*
I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm so angry and embarrassed.
Mom! She's calling again.
Just ignore it, honey. I'll call her back when I'm done.
Okay.
So...I get it now. You came here because you needed support.
Hmmm?
Support. A shoulder to cry on. Someone to talk to.
No.
No?
I came here because with as bad as things were for me, I just wanted to feel better.
So I figured I'd come check out your whole... situation.

You know, compare what I'm going through to your perfectly normal, perfectly average, bore-me-to-death existence.
...
What is *wrong* with you?
Haven't you been paying attention? *Plenty.*
But turns out the joke's on me.
I knew your job was going well, but...
Your kids are amazing. And sure, as much as I didn't care for you settling for Peter, I have to say... there is something different about him.
I just thought boring was the worst thing someone could be and that you deserved a more exciting life.
What I wouldn't give for boring right now.
If you think this is in any way an apology for year after year of unacceptable behavior...
...it is *not.*

Is that really all you want from me?
An apology? Fine...
sorry.
Well, I'm also kinda wondering if you ever signed your prenup.
I did not.
Good for you.
...
I really am sorry. I know I've been awful.
I forgive you.
But don't do it again.

Here you go. Happy holidays, pal.
You always know just what to get me.
I noticed you chatting with MJ's mom.
And Anna.
Hmmmm.
What about it?
Fine-looking woman.
You think she'd fancy a guy like me?
Of course she would. I was thinkin' about askin' her out.
You think I should ask her out?
...
Absolutely.
Well, I just might do that.
I know it started off rough, pal, but this just might be the perfect end to a very good year.
No, Jonah... all things considered...

...I'd say it was a great year.

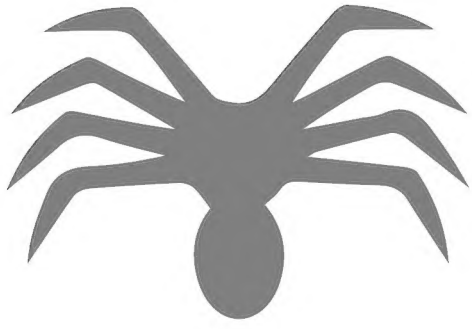


"**Happiness** is being surrounded by the people you love."

Mom! She's calling again!
Excuse me for a second.
Hello? Gwen?
Oh god, finally. Why haven't you been picking up? I'm losing my mind here. Is Peter there? Does he know whe--?
Hold on.
Peter!
Something's up.
Okay, Gwen...you're on speaker. What's going on.
I'm at our house for the holidays. I had a meeting out of town, so I came straight here, and Harry was supposed to drive up, but he didn't show up.
That was six days ago, and I can't reach him.
Does Peter have any idea where he is?

Peter?
Peter. Did you hear what Gwen was saying?
Do you know where Harry is?
Peter?
What th--
Oh my god... You're...
You're not Peter.
Who... Where is...
What have you done?

Where is he? Answer me! Why won't--?
Hey! Where is my husband? Tell me!
Say something!
Merry Christmas.



"**Fear** is knowing it can all be taken away."

EPILOGUE